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Councillor says refusal to test effect is 'missed opportunity'

NEW CALL FOR FREE PARKING

Kieran Davey
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A DECISION not to hold a trial of free parking in Banbury is a missed opportunity for the town, according to local councillors and business owners.

A motion to suspend parking charges at Cherwell District Council-operated car parks in both Banbury and Bicester was rejected earlier this month after being put forward by Labour councillor Sean Woodcock.

The temporary suspension would have been in operation from 9.30am on Thursdays during February, except for ultra-short-stay car parks and drop-off points.

Mr Woodcock, who is leader of the Banbury and Bicester Labour group, said: "There has been a lot of interest in free parking, because, obviously, there is not much of it in the town centre at the moment.

"The purpose of the trial would be to see if it would bring more shoppers to the town. The response from councillors has been that the cost would be too high and that there is no evidence that it would make any difference to the town centre."

People parking in Bicester and Banbury have had free parking in council-owned and operated car parks in the build-up to Christmas.

The free parking will continue until January 10, available from 3pm daily.

Mr Woodcock added: "Doing the trial at this time of year is flawed, as people will always go Christmas shopping."

Caroline Taylor, owner of baby and toddler clothing store Merry-GoRoundUK in Church Lane, said: "We have been looking at our footfall over the past few weeks.

"Whereas normally we see more customers at the lunchtime period, what we have found is that our afternoon sales have picked up."

Banbury Chamber of Commerce president Richard Hunter supported the idea of introducing free parking, but questioned how the effectiveness of the trial could be measured.

He said: "We would greatly welcome a trial period of free parking, as it would give us a good idea of whether it would rejuvenate the town centre.

"There are a number of retailers who think free parking will offer them an advantage when they are facing competition from Banbury Gateway Centre and Castle Quay – both of which we support – which have put pressure on some of the independent stores."

"Whether this will get abused by people working in the town centre remains to be seen and we would love to know how the trial would be measured to test whether it can work."

He said any trial should be held over a longer period than a month.

Sean Woodcock, inset, campaigned for a trial of free parking in Banbury and Bicester to take place in 2016

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Keep heating on

OXON: Residents struggling with fuel bills are being urged to keep their heating on this winter.

Trade association for the oil heating industry OFTEC said turning down the thermostat during the cold weather could lead to health problems.

It comes after it was revealed there were 270 excess winter deaths in Oxfordshire in 2013/14.

Residents are being advised to keep the temperature of their main room at least 21C, check heating timers, turn off radiators in rooms not being used and ensure nothing blocks radiators.

The county's 17,000 oil households are being reminded to check there is enough oil in the tank.

Crew saves horse

DEDDINGTON: A horse had to be rescued by firefighters after becoming stuck in a ditch in Hempton, near Deddington.

The fire service sent an engine from Deddington to the scene along with a rescue tender from Kidlington at 4.15pm on Boxing Day.

Firefighters then called a vet who helped them to lift the horse out of the ditch using slings.

The horse was not seriously hurt in the incident and was released from the ditch after about an hour.

River flood alert

OXON: Boaters were warned not to travel along parts of the Oxford Canal after the River Cherwell flooded at the weekend.

The navigation closure was between Bakers Lock and Shipton Weir Lock, near Shipton-on-Cherwell.

The Canal and River Trust said the closure affecting the canal's southern section would be in place from Monday until further notice.

There was also a further navigation closure between Nell Lock Bridge and Aynho Weir Lock, near Adderbury, with the towpath also closed.

Victim is named

BANBURY: A 20-year-old man, who died in a three-car crash on the A4260, has been named as Callum Jeycock, of Banbury.

He had been driving from Adderbury towards Deddington on Friday, December 18, at about 7.30am when his car collided with a tipper lorry travelling the other way. A Volkswagen Passat also crashed and a Peugeot 206 was hit with debris.

Police confirmed Mr Jeycock died at the scene.

Landlord fined for breaching safety regulations at property

A LANDLORD was fined £1,000 for failing to correctly manage one of his Banbury properties.

Vas Tari, of North Bar Street, pleaded guilty at Banbury Magistrates' Court on December 15 to five offences relating to the management of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

The house, also in North Bar Street, was inspected by a district council environmental health officer on June 17. They found fire escapes had been blocked, unsafe electrics and dirty communal areas, in breach of the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006.

Despite being warned, the court was told the issues had not been solved when the inspector returned on July 1. Tari was prosecuted by the council for failing to comply with his duties.

Tari was fined £200 per offence, and ordered to pay £250 costs, a £20 victim surcharge and a £150 criminal courts charge.

Cherwell District Council's lead member for planning, John Donaldson, said: "We have a good relationship with the majority of landlords and we successfully work with them to make sure they comply with the relevant regulations.

"But when a landlord is clearly not complying we will take the necessary action.

"This landlord disregarded our advice and warnings and, aside from the fines that the court imposed, now also has a criminal conviction as a result."

Rambler puts his long life down to 'a lot of walking'

Former brewery worker also credits his happy marriage as well as regular socialising

Bob Clement, 90, says his secret for a longer life has been his many long trips as a member of the Banbury Ramblers

FOR Bob Clement, the secret to living a long life has been going for a weekly walk; with a couple of pints thrown in for good measure.

The former brewery worker celebrated his 90th birthday last month and has dedicated his healthy lifestyle to spending over 25 years with the Banbury and North Oxfordshire Ramblers.

After joining the group in 1986, the Bloxham Road resident completed at least a 10-mile walk every Sunday, only stopping five years ago because of his age.

He said: "I have done a lot of walking in my time – we started when I moved to Banbury from Birmingham.

"We decided to go along one Sunday and try it out and that was it for 25 years.

"It is good exercise and I love the countryside.

"It is nice to walk with other people and of course there is the social side as well, I've made a lot of friends.

"I also spent 10 years as chairman, which I enjoyed apart from always having to go to Oxford for meetings."

He added that his most enjoyable route was walking through the picturesque village of Broadway in Worcestershire, while he has also raised money for various charities by taking on coast-to-coast walks.

Despite having to give up walking, he still finds time to enjoy one of his favourite pastimes with the ramblers, joining them in the pub after a walk for a few drinks.

For his birthday, Mr Clement – who has two children, Michael and Patricia – enjoyed a large party at Chacombe Village Hall, which was attended by family, friends and more than a hundred ramblers.

He added: "Now that I have reached this incredible age I am often asked how I manage to look so well.

"I usually reply that 53 years of being waited on hand and foot in a very happy marriage probably has a lot to do with it.

"There a few rambling clubs in the county, but we think we are the most active, we do the most walks and we have the biggest turnout every week."

As well as his walking Mr Clement – whose wife of 53 years, Jean, died 10 years ago, at the age of 82 – he has appeared in more than 70 productions for the Banbury Cross Players drama group, specialising in comedy parts.

He also spent four years as the group's chairman.

The Banbury and North Oxfordshire Ramblers hold walks each Sunday, on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday evenings only during the summer.

For more information on the ramblers' group, visit ramblers.org.uk/banbury-north-oxfordshire.

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Make giving blood your New Year's resolution for 2016

HOSPITALS are urging people in Oxfordshire to make a New Year's resolution that will save lives: Give blood.

NHS Blood and Transplant says fewer than three per cent of people aged 17 to 70 donated blood in the last year.

The Oxford Donor Centre for NHS Blood and Transplant manager, Cheryl Howarth, said: "We'd really love new and existing blood donors to come down and donate over the next couple of weeks – it's the time of year we need them more than ever.

"Blood donations drop significantly over the festive period because people are very busy and the weather can be poor."

One of the county's oldest blood donors, Karin Oldham, said it was "necessary" that more people come forward to sign up and urged more to join the register.

Mrs Oldham has donated for more than 50 years and given the equivalent of 85 pints of blood.

The 77-year-old from Marston said: "I see no reason for people not to be doing it."

To book an appointment, visit blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 2323. Bookings can also be made through mobile apps by searching NHSGiveBlood.

Tom Murfitt gives a blood donation

'No HS2 benefits for communities'

MP warns of the negative impact rail link may have on towns it'll run through

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A NEW high-speed rail link between London and Birmingham would cause "significant issues" for the north of Oxfordshire, according to the area's MP.

Victoria Prentis said although the proposed building of HS2 would not include any stations in the region, she was concerned about the effect the project's construction would have on communities.

During the construction process, lorries are likely to use the M40 junction for Banbury to travel between stations.

The Banbury MP said: "I have long been concerned about the impact of the proposed building of HS2 on our region.

"There will not be a station in our constituency, so any perceived benefits will not be seen by those who live and commute from here.

"There are a number of significant issues in the constituency, with several villages suffering exceptionally acute problems, including noise, impacts on bridleway, and visual intrusion into unspoilt landscapes."

Victoria Prentis says people see no benefits from the HS2 project

In particular, Mrs Prentis said she was concerned about the effect of construction lorries on Wardington, a village found about four miles north of Banbury.

She said: "Very large numbers of HGVs moving through Wardington would greatly damage this beautiful village.

"I have raised concerns regarding the width of roads through the village, and how additional vehicles will be able to pass one another."

Independent train commentator Hugh Jaegar said he agreed with the MP's concerns.

The Oxford resident said: "We have just seen another climate change deal signed in Paris and this rail link seems like a step back from that.

"In the next few years we will have to deal with the need to control pollution and this link is just going to cause more carbon emissions than before.

"I would encourage Victoria Prentis to look at the carbon figures from HS2.

"Every day that goes by without scrapping this project just makes things worse."

Wardington Parish Council vice-chairman Nigel Bankes said he was concerned about the number of HGVs travelling through the village during the construction process, and confirmed that he would be raising the issue directly with the Government in the new year.

The Government is hoping to open the London to Birmingham line by 2026.

Mrs Prentis confirmed she had asked for assurances from Government ministers regarding vehicle movements in Banbury and the impact it would have on the town centre.

Hospital car parks' fees rumpus

THE cost and availability of parking at Oxfordshire's hospitals has been criticised after it was revealed that patients, visitors and staff spent £3.7m in the car parks.

The news that charges at hospitals such as the John Radcliffe and the Churchill in Oxford and the Horton brought in six per cent more in 2014/15 than in the previous year led to a flurry of comments on the *Banbury Cake* website.

Reader Sahara,12, said: "I would not find the charges so hard to swallow if the parking facilities were significantly improved. If they used the funds they made to finance improvements, they could reduce the stress for people."

Another reader, EMBOX3, said: "There is no way it costs £3m a year to run some car parks."

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) said £2,957,000 was used to cover the costs of running the car park office, paying for security, legal fees and site maintenance, or invested in patent care.

Reader Stacey Lyon, who defended the charges, said: "I'm up at the hospital on a monthly basis with my daughter and only ever have to pay about £3, which is cheaper than a bus fare."

FIRE PUT OUT AT PIZZA SHOP

BANBURY: Firefighters tackled a blaze at Primavera Pizza in South Bar Street on Christmas morning.

Crews were sent out at 5.30am and had to force their way in to stop the fire spreading to neighbouring properties.

Two people in flats above the shop were rescued after being woken by a smoke alarm. The cause is being investigated.

TOWN BLUEPRINT DEBATE

CHERWELL: A meeting of Cherwell District Council's executive committee on Monday will discuss the future of children's centres in the county and a public consultation for a Banbury Masterplan to map out future development.

The open meeting will be held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, at 6.30pm.

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REVIEW OF THE

From flower festivals to musical prodigies, a change of representative at

January

TAKE That star Howard Donald married his long-time girlfriend at 17th-century Aynhoe Park, near Banbury.

According to the *Daily Mirror*, the 46-year-old was joined by bandmates Gary Barlow, Mark Owen and former member Jason Orange for his wedding to Katie Halil.

A spokesman for the band said the couple had married in a "private ceremony", although Aynhoe Park declined to comment.

The pair met in 2008, while the band were recording an advert for Marks & Spencer, and they began dating in 2010.

The house had also played host to the much-publicised wedding of Jade Jagger and DJ Adrian Fillery in 2012.

A COLLECTION of colours, movement and playful textures lined the walls of the Mill Arts Centre for a new exhibition in January.

Inscapes, held at the Spiceball Park centre, was a collation of paintings and etchings from 10 years of work by artist and psychotherapist Heleena Yates.

The 66-year-old took inspiration from her work in creative therapy, producing abstracts as self-expression.

The pieces were made of large frames, which use acrylics and organic materials such as earth and sand to create complex layers and textures.

The arts education assistant at the centre, Emma Nooney, said: "We are really excited to have Heleena's work exhibited at the Mill. Her work is bold, colourful and extremely eye-catching."

The centre has a 200-seat theatre and holds a variety of activities, including dance classes, youth theatre groups and arts and crafts workshops.

FATHER-of-three Ian Morton – a Falklands War hero believed to be the final British solider injured in the conflict – was laid to rest in Banbury in January.

He was described as an "unsung hero" after passing away at home in Upper Heyford on New Year's Day.

During his 13 years in the Scots Guards, Mr Morton served in Northern Ireland and the Falkland Islands.

On the morning of June 14, 1982, he was hit by a grenade and shrapnel in ferocious fighting during the Battle of Mount Tumbledown.

His daughter, Candice, 30, said: "I will remember his sense of humour and his stories; they were just great.

"The last time I saw him was last year, just a few weeks after the birth of my son, Daniel."

February

A GUITAR prodigy from Bloxham gained an online audience of hundreds of thousands in February.

Toby Lee, 10, started out played the ukulele and played it so much he ended up wearing out the strings.

But a video of him jamming on his guitar was uploaded by a Seattle radio station on Facebook and gained more than 750,000 views.

He also performed live on BBC Radio 2 on February 2, playing AC/DC's *Highway to Hell*.

He said: "My dad got me into it by playing lullabies on his guitar when I was little.

"Then my grandmother bought me a ukulele for my fourth birthday and I just started making up songs.

"I still play air guitar on it sometimes."

Toby was a pupil at Crackley Hall at the time he hit internet and it started a "school of rock" in his honour.

Guitar prodigy Toby Lee's videos on YouTube had more than 750,000 views

TOWN crier Anthony Church admitted wearing military medals he was not entitled to in February.

During the past 12 years, Mr Church had worked as a town crier in Banbury as well as in Oxford, Thame and Wallingford.

The 62-year-old did not have a military background, but admitted he had been wearing the British Empire Medal, the South Atlantic Medal – awarded to soldiers who served in the Falklands – and the General Service Medal with Northern Ireland clasp.

He also admitted once lying to Jim Lewendon, the county chairman of the Royal British Legion, telling him that he had served in the Coldstream Guards.

He said: "I am truly sorry if anyone, including servicemen, ex-servicemen and their families have taken offence at what I did."

Mr Church said the medals were worn as a tribute to his late father and other servicemen.

March

A BUDDING singer-songwriter was announced as the winner of *Banbury's Got Talent 2015* in March.

Seventeen-year-old Jamie Felton, from Ardley, stole the show with his rendition of the Olly Murs hit, *Troublemaker*.

For this year's contest, 36 entrants were whittled down to 11 finalists, including dancers, singers and musicians.

After his victory, Jamie said: "I was really nervous. There were more people than I'm used to.

"I didn't audition this year, as I got to the final last year. I've definitely improved since then; the judges said my voice had got stronger."

He has played guitar for almost nine years and said his chief musical inspirations were Green Day, the Beatles, Bryan Adams and Queen.

Runners-up on the night were vocal duo Marley & D and, in joint third place, singer Madison Desborough and vocal guitarist George Rose.

VETERAN Banbury MP Sir Tony Baldry gave his final speech in the House of Commons in March.

The Conservative politician stepped down at the May General Election, after 32 years as an MP for Banbury. He was succeeded by Victoria Prentis.

His last address to the chamber formed part of a debate on the Budget, which was announced by Chancellor George Osborne.

This town centre landmark telephone box finally became a miniature library

Cherwell Guides organised this year's St George's Day parade, above; Town crier Anthony Church, below, was in trouble over medals

Tony Baldry brought his time as MP to an end at the General Election

In his speech, he thanked the Chancellor for the £40m made available for church roof repairs.

He said: "For many people, the presence of a church in their community is symbolic of the nation and a source of support and comfort even for those who are not regular church-goers."

April

FLAGS, owls and jesters took to the streets of Banbury to celebrate St George's Day in April.

Scores of youngsters from all divisions and units of the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Senior Section made their way through the town for the annual parade.

Catherine Blackburn, assistant Guider and district administrator for Deddington, organised the event.

She said: "It was fantastic. We had a very good response. A lot of people stopped and watched the route round.

"You couldn't not hear us coming with the band. The sun shone for us, as well."

Schools also made sure they marked the day. Pupils from St John's Priory School lined up in their playground, holding coloured cards to create an English flag.

May

NEW Banbury MP Victoria Prentis took up her seat in the House of Commons in May.

It was confirmed that the Conservative candidate had won 53 per cent of the vote in the General Election, with the result announced at the Spiceball Leisure Centre.

She also managed to increase predecessor Sir Tony Baldry's majority by a slim margin.

Mrs Prentis said: "I never expected to increase his majority.

"It is extraordinary ... and a testament to the strong Conservative council we have in Cherwell and the fact that we have benefitted locally from the national economic boom.

"I feel great. The local result is great but the national result is also fantastic."

Labour candidate Sean Woodcock came second with 12,354 votes, compared with Mrs Prentis's 30,749.

A GLOWING Ofsted report was received by staff and students at Bloxham Pre-School in May.

The school, in Tadmarton Road, which has 49 children, received mainly "Good" scores with a few "Outstanding" at the last assessment in 2012.

But the new report gave the school an "Outstanding" report on every front.

Supervisor Debbie Davies said: "She [the inspector] spent the whole day with us and talked to the staff and children.

"It's a well-deserved rating, because the staff work so hard and are very committed every day that they come here."

June

ST JOHN'S Church in Bodicote was blooming with flowers is Banbury Floral Art Group celebrated its diamond anniversary with a flower festival.

Across three days, members were invited to enter into a competition, which was split into three categories and themes.

The novice category was given the theme "celebration", the intermediate "60 glorious years" and the experienced "diamonds are forever."

Chairwoman Margaret Hughes said: "It was a lovely way to celebrate such a special occasion and we saw some great floral displays."

The winners were Pam Stayton (novice), Debra Ord (intermediate) and Sue Smithson (experienced).

YEAR – 2015

Westminster and new use for a phonebox in 12 months

July

THE landmark phone box library was opened permanently in Banbury in July, after months of local campaigning.

Members of Banbury Town Council and former MP Sir Tony Baldry were on hand to unveil the new attraction during a ceremony in South Bar Street.

Banbury Town Council leader Kieron Mallon said everyone should be proud of their role in keeping the phone box library alive.

An anonymous benefactor had installed shelves and books in a phone box on the site last year, but the plan was scuppered by BT on health and safety grounds.

Local residents, along with the town council, campaigned to keep the phone box library up-and-running.

Eventually, the council and BT agreed that the communications service would provide a second phone box next to it, to be installed and maintained by the council.

August

A PENSIONER was reunited with more than 100 pocket watches that had been stolen from his Banbury home.

The 115-piece collection was taken from horologist Henry Peverill, 72, in March 2014, but, thanks to a UV postcode on one watch, police were finally able to track down their rightful owner. The collection turned up four days after the burglary, when the antiques were seized by Coventry police at a pawnbroker's shop.

PC James Rees said: "It is always incredibly satisfying to return stolen items to where they belong, especially when they are irreplaceable and embody so much sentiment and memory as these watches do.

"Mr Peverill had understandably given up all hope of ever seeing them again, so it was great to hand them over."

September

THE Salvation Army in Banbury celebrated 130 years of Christian service in September, by staging two big community events.

Volunteers put on a big birthday tea, with drinks and cake for visitors, and a praise concert featuring music from the Salvation Army African Praise Choir.

Lieutenant Xander Coleman said: "To have lasted 130 years is a credit to the generosity of people who have got involved in the community. These events are to thank them."

The Banbury Corps started in 1885 and moved to its George Street home five years later. It now runs a food bank and gives blankets to the homeless.

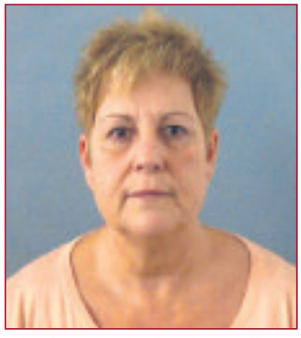
HANWELL Fields Community Centre, used by almost 700 people a week, was saved from closure in September after new volunteers came forward to run it.

Its previous managers, Peter Goode and Chris Gaynor, announced in 2013 that they would be stepping down after nine years, but two years on nobody had offered to take over.

Then, after the *Banbury Cake* reported that the future of the centre was in doubt, a group of volunteers came forward to manage the centre following a public meeting.

Mr Goode said: "We had a very good turnout from people in the community.

"We had hoped for good news after all the publicity we had and had encouraged parents and users of the centre to come to the meeting."



Salvation Army husband and wife team Xander and Vanessa Coleman, with son Isaac; Julia Knight, above

October

THE sun came out to shine down on boaters and visitors for Banbury's annual Canal Day in October.

The festival, which took place on the Oxford Canal, beside the Castle Quay shopping centre, began at 10.30pm, when the Dancing Duck narrowboat made its way along the water, followed by a steamboat and a flotilla of canoeists.

Tooley's Boatyard displayed old engines and boats, giving visitors the chance to watch a blacksmith at work.

The Mill Arts Centre also opened its doors for entertainment and food.

Town council leader Kieron Mallon said: "This is one of the most well-attended events in north Oxfordshire, probably because it offers something for everyone."

Hanwell Fields Community Centre's Chris Gaynor and Peter Goode; canal artist Louise Bunker, left

Continental market stallholders get into the Christmas spirit in December

November

NURSE Julia Knight was jailed for 14 years in November, after poisoning her elderly mother with insulin during a failed murder attempt.

Knight admitted administrating the potentially lethal dose to Irene Robson, 81, while she was recovering at the Horton General Hospital from a fall.

The 56-year-old denied attempted murder and told Oxford Crown Court she had just wanted her mother to have a "medical blip" so that she would get better care.

But a jury of five women and seven men unanimously found her guilty, following more than 14 hours of deliberation, of attempting to murder her mother.

Sentencing Knight, Judge Ian Pringle said: "Your mother was in her early 80s, she was unwell and was particularly vulnerable.

"This was an act of enormous stupidity on your part."

December

FOODIES in Banbury received a early festive treat as a continental market returned to the town.

The market, staged in Market Place by Savoir-Fayre and Cherwell District Council, attracted a range of traders and food from different countries, selling baguettes, hog roast and more.

Most of the traders involved were from France, including Lulu Legallaise, who ran a cheese stall.

She said: "Banbury is very nice. We like the people here and we like coming here to sell our cheese; the weather is like the Cote d'Azur".

Crafts, fashion and decorations stalls gave visitors the chance to buy Christmas gifts.

Fundraisers Sian Morris and Amanda Baxter at their Forget-Me-Not Ball, staged at Broughton Grange in the summer

Leisure site scores top report mark

The Spiceball Leisure Centre, Banbury

BANBURY's Spiceball leisure centre has been awarded top marks by Sport England after a recent inspection.

The leisure centre, in Cherwell Drive in the town centre, was given high scores for its services, lessons and facilities in a report produced by the National Benchmarking Service for Sports and Leisure Centres.

As part of the study, more than 300 centre visitors were surveyed on the ease of booking, cleanliness, quality of equipment and value for money.

The report gave particular praise to operators Legacy Leisure for their efficient financial management, low energy consumption and maintenance costs.

Manager Graham Bleach said: "The results are a great reflection on the centre. We're absolutely delighted with them.

"We have a very strong focus on quality and work hard to improve our performance whilst never forgetting the basics such as cleanliness and motivated staff. Everyone is pleased that their efforts are being recognised."

Cherwell District Council deputy leader George Reynolds said: "Since we built the new Spiceball Leisure Centre six years ago, it's gone from strength to strength.

"The centre continues to provide excellent facilities to Cherwell residents and I want to thank and congratulate the staff in having achieved this recognition as one of the highest performing leisure centres in the country."

Cafe puts students' art exhibition on its menu

Kitty Giles – AKA Kitty Frilling – with her self-portrait at Naomi's Cafe, Banbury, which is displaying work by City of Oxford College students

Kitty Giles was asked to display her pictures, and she invited fellow coursemates to pick a piece and join her as well

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

PRIZED artwork belonging to students at the City of Oxford College has been put on display at a Banbury cafe.

Student Kitty Giles, from Banbury, was offered the chance to display her artwork at Naomi's Cafe after staff were impressed with her creative talents.

But rather than fill the Bridge Street cafe with her own artwork, she invited her coursemates from college to display their own pictures as well. For the exhibition Mrs Giles – who uses Kitty Frilling as her artist's name – told students to pick one of their pieces which they felt best represented themselves.

Each picture displayed, including several self-portraits, was created by someone in the class during the last college term.

The 27-year-old said: "It is quite rare for people on the course to do their own independent exhibitions, and when I was offered the chance to display my work in the cafe I wanted to get the rest of the students involved.

"For those wanting to go on to university as well it's a great thing to have on your application and CV.

"A lot of my work is made using pen and ink and it was good for us to display different styles here."

The exhibition was unveiled at an open evening on December 18, which also featured the cafe's regular open mic night.

Mrs Giles said: "I've produced quite a few bits of work and I thought it was only fair to let people pick which one I was going to display.

"I feel that we all now have a good grasp of what art embodies each person in our class.

"People have been really positive so far.

"We've had some nice comments in the guest book and we've had people coming from far, including family, to come and see what we've done."

After graduating from college, Mrs Giles is hoping to do an arts degree run by Oxford Brookes, eventually becoming a freelance artist.

Naomi's Cafe owner Naomi Perkins said: "This is very much a space where we want people to express themselves, and Kitty is a major part of what we are doing here at the cafe.

"It was fantastic when she agreed to put on the display with the students, and we know she has had good feedback from the tutors on her course.

"The pictures have been well-received in the cafe, they are very interesting and expressive."

The exhibition will be on display until early next month.

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Tourism boss gets new role

AN OXFORDSHIRE tourism boss has been elected as chairman of a national group which represents those who work in the tourist trade.

Hayley Beer-Gamage, who took over as chief executive of Experience Oxfordshire earlier this year, was voted into the top job at the Tourism Society.

The organisation has more than 1,200 members across the world and Ms Beer-Gamage has been its vice-chairman since 2013 following a year on the board of directors prior to that.

It aims to boost tourism around the United Kingdom by creating a network of tourism professionals.

Following her election on December 9 Ms Beer-Gamage said she wanted to make sure the organisation remained as the leader in the tourism sector.

She said: "I am proud to now be leading two important organisations in the tourism sector and I am privileged that both the board of Experience Oxfordshire and the Tourism Society have put their faith in my hands.

"However the key to success in both organisations is partnership working and team work and I am delighted to be working with such great partners and have such wonderful teams supporting me.

"I very much look forward to growing these organisations."

Hayley Beer-Gamage in top job

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Barber's had locks to do in half a century

He's been cutting hair for 50 years and seen styles come full circle

Clemence Michallon
news@nqo.com

WHEN Robert Pewsey became a barber, Harold Wilson was Britain's prime minister, miniskirts were still a new thing and Noel Gallagher had not been born.

As 2015 marks Mr Pewsey's 50th year in the trade, he remembers generations of young people going under his blade and scissors in a perpetual circle of trends.

Mr Pewsey, 65, who has lived in Banbury all his life, qualified as a barber when he was 15, after a three-year apprenticeship.

He said: "I just went in a shop, liked the way people cut the hair and I just carried on doing it."

In 1982, Mr Pewsey sold his Banbury shop and made the move to Oxford. He has now worked at High Street Barbers, in High Street, for 34 years.

He said: "Trends have come full circle. Back then, it was short hair, then long hair in 1965, when the Beatles came in, and now it's back to short hair.

"I have always enjoyed doing flat-tops; that was back in the 60s and 70s, when there were a lot of Americans about.

"I see the same kind of people now. Lots of them have been here for years. We have long-standing customers. It's gone so fast; you just don't realise. As long as you're happy with your work, you just keep doing it."

Roger Howard, left, and Banbury resident Robert Pewsey, long-serving staff of High Street Barbers

A good barber, he said, should be "willing to talk and be good with their hands, because you use them all the time with scissors and clippers".

He added that, although he chats with customers, politics and religion are usually discussions to avoid.

The father-of-two, who also has a grandson and a granddaughter, plays golf and supports Banbury United. He has been married to Glynis for 41 years.

High Street Barbers is one of the oldest barber shops in Oxford, according to Mr Pewsey, who says it most likely opened in the 1940s.

He works alongside Roger Howard, 71, who has been doing the job for 56 years and joined 22 years ago.

Hosts reminded to cut the risks of food poisoning this new year

PARTY season hosts are being warned to make sure they do not upset family and friends' tums at a time when food poisoning risks run high.

Cherwell District Council, in partnership with the Food Standards Agency, has released tips to help avoid food poisoning and to cut down on waste.

The lead member for public protection, Tony Ilott, said: "Christmas is a busy time for families.

"The last thing anyone wants is a bout of food poisoning, caused by badly stored or prepared meals.

"It can be tricky catering for more people than usual, so please take extra care when it comes to defrosting and cooking food, and make sure you store food safely.

"And while we encourage you to cut down on waste by using leftovers, please ensure they are still safe to eat."

The council suggests people check their fridge temperature is below 5C and is not over-crowded to prevent cross-contamination.

Ensure raw food is covered and chilled on the bottom shelf of the fridge.

With leftovers, cool and cover them with two hours and eat or freeze leftovers within two days.

Concert raising funds for Syrian refugees proves huge success

A FLAGSHIP concert, organised by Banbury MP Victoria Prentis, has helped raise nearly £60,000 to support Syrian refugees.

Nearly 300 people joined the North Oxfordshire MP for the *Singing for Syrians* concert on December 15 at Westminster.

The event was the brainchild of Mrs Prentis, who has spent the last few months encouraging people to organise their own fundraiser in support of refugees, or donate money at the pre-planned carol concert.

For the service, which was held at St Margaret's Church, Mayor of London Boris Johnson gave a reading and Oxford West and Abingdon MP Nicola Blackwood delivered her own rendition of the carol *Silent Night*.

Mrs Prentis said: "I am very lucky to have had so much support from colleagues and am so grateful to all those who performed so brilliantly."

She added: "*Singing for Syrians* crystallised as an idea after I attended the Westminster Hall vigil for the refugees in September.

"I started thinking about all those who are unable to even contemplate leaving the country.

"Often they are too old, too young or too unwell to leave."

The money, which was collected through the concert and other fundraising, will pay for the salaries of medical teams in Aleppo, in Syria.

All money raised through the concert will also be matched by the Department for International Development.

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Good causes chosen for extra cash boost

Staff and volunteers at Katharine House celebrate their Gannett award of more than £7,000 towards a new minibus

Peter Truman
ptruman@nqo.com

EVERY year charities in Oxfordshire start the New Year with an extra boost, thanks to the *Banbury Cake* and its sister papers in the county.

The Gannett Foundation, the charitable arm of the paper's parent company Gannett, offers community groups the chance to apply for donations of between £5,000 and £10,000.

It is always a tough decision to whittle down the many worthy applications that come in from charities doing amazing work across the county.

This year's applications were reviewed by staff and the best ones were sent on to the Gannett Foundation to decide which groups would receive grants.

Three were chosen – the Katharine House hospice near Banbury, Abingdon Riding for the Disabled and ARCh assisted reading for children – and have been handed money that will make a huge difference to the people that use their services.

The Newsquest regional editor for Oxfordshire and Wiltshire, Gary Lawrence, said about this year's winners: "The Gannett grants focus on projects that bring lasting benefits to communities across Oxfordshire.

"We are delighted to be able to award these three charities the money they so rightly deserve.

"It was a difficult decision to make, as we received so many strong applications.

"But these three organisations stood out above all the others, and we are confident this money will go towards projects that will truly benefit the people of Oxfordshire."

Previous charities to benefit include Oxfordshire Crossroads, a charity which provides care for adults and children across the county.

It received £25,300 in 2009 – the biggest sum to be awarded to date – to buy a van converted so wheelchair users and their families could use it for anything from hospital visits to holidays.

Another previous winner was Orinoco, a charity based at Bullingdon Community Centre in Headington, Oxford.

The group, which collects and re-uses commercial waste materials from businesses across Oxfordshire, was given £2,360.

Money is van-tastic news for hospice

THE largest grant this year was awarded to Katharine House Hospice in Banbury, and staff, patients and volunteers have said they are delighted.

The organisation, which provides free care for people with a terminal illness, applied for a sum of £7,265 to go towards a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

Partnership fundraiser at the hospice Daphne Robertson said it was "a very pleasant" surprise, to hear they had received funding. She said: "We know it's a very competitive scheme and we were thrilled.

"We have already ordered the vehicle – a Vauxhall Vivaro Combo – which can actually fit in bigger wheelchairs. We will be using this one to take people to and from the hospice, and to appointments."

The organisation had already received a donation of £10,500 towards the vehicle, which costs more than £17,000.

When the new van arrives in the new year, it will mean more people with terminal illnesses can attend the hospice.

Housebuilder helps Guides to hold joint event

TWO Girlguiding groups from North Oxfordshire were able to hold a joint Christmas celebration, after a £300 donation from a local housebuilder.

The 1st Hook Norton Guides and the Swere Valley Senior Section organised a festive social to celebrate each other's achievements over the last year, paid for by Taylor Wimpey.

The girls, aged between 10 and 17, spent the evening at the Sun pub in Hook Norton where they enjoyed a meal and had a friendly game of bar skittles.

Guide leader Julie Wood, whose daughter Katie runs the senior section, said: "It was an opportunity for the girls to have some fun, but it also helped the transition for those who will soon be joining the older group so it will be less daunting when they move up."

She added that she was 'absolutely delighted' with the donation by the housebuilder, which is currently building homes at their new Bourne View development in Hook Norton.

Sales and marketing director for Taylor Wimpey Oxfordshire, Nikki Gibson, said: "We are always keen to support the communities in which we build our new homes and when we heard that the Hook Norton Guides and the village's senior section could do with some financial support, we were delighted to help."

Three treated after collision

THREE people needed treatment from ambulance staff after a three-vehicle collision before Christmas.

One lorry and two cars were involved in the crash on the A4260 at about 7.30am. on Friday, December 18. Emergency services were called to the incident, between Berry Hill Road in Adderbury and the B4301 in Deddington.

David Gallagher, a spokesman for South Central Ambulance Service, said three people were treated for their injuries at the scene.

He added: "It was a serious collision involving a lorry and two cars. The lorry went off the road."

Thames Valley Police spokeswoman Lucy Billen said the road was closed both ways at the Deddington crossroads while the emergency services worked at the scene.

Comedy group to put on show

COMEDY group the Noise Next Door will be performing their new show at the Mill Arts Centre in Banbury in January.

The five-man group are on a nationwide tour after selling out their show at the Edinburgh Fringe festival last year. As part of their act, the actors will perform their own brand of improvised comedy, with songs and scenes based on audience suggestions.

The performance will take place on January 22. For more information and tickets, visit thenoisenextdoor.co.uk.

Sovereigns stolen

GOLD coins and 15 bottles of wine were stolen from a Banbury property.

Police said thieves smashed their way into the Burn Road home and took two gold sovereigns, a half sovereign and the wine early on December 13.

An actor's life for Cara during summer school

Sibford School youngster scoops prestigious place to study modules at RADA

Georgina Campbell
news@nqo.com

Cara Mattinson, 16, with Sibford's head of drama, Neil Madden, after getting a place on the RADA course

A BANBURY schoolgirl will be stepping into the spotlight after being awarded a place at a prestigious summer school.

Cara Mattinson, 16, will be spending her summer holidays next year at the the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts Young Actors Summer School.

The student at Sibford School will be studying two modules, Exploring Shakespeare, which will see her work on scenes, monologues and stage fighting and Contemporary Text, where she will examine how the world is reflected in contemporary writing for modern theatre.

Cara said: "It's been my ambition to get into the RADA Summer School and I'm really happy to have the privilege of being able to go in 2016."

The RADA Summer School provides young actors with an experience of a leading British drama school and illuminates the distinction between drama as it is taught at school and as a vocational training.

Neil Madden, head of drama at Sibford School, said: "There was very stiff competition for this placement, therefore we are delighted that Cara's application was successful. It will be a great opportunity for her to learn more about the craft of acting and will be a good preparation for her future plans."

Cara's next starring role will be as the wicked witch of the west in Sibford School's production of *The Wizard of Oz*.

The musical will be staged at the school between February 9 and February 11, 2016, with a special performance for primary school pupils on February 8.

Recycling leftovers from festive season

PEOPLE are being urged to recycle as much of their festive season waste as possible and to try not to throw away excess food.

Oxfordshire County Council has urged people to visit the Love Food Hate Waste website to find tips on how to cook the right amount for celebrations and what to do with leftovers.

Spokeswoman Emily Reed said: "Every day we throw away 1.5 million meals, whether it be homemade or ready made.

"Better planning and good use of leftovers means that you can create less waste and free up more time for festivities."

The county council also urged people to check opening times for its household waste recycling centres, which will be operating reduced hours.

The sites will be closed on New Year's Day and also close early, at 3pm, on New Year's Eve.

The centres can be used to recycle real Christmas trees, cardboard packaging, old electrical items, textiles and wrapping paper. For more information call 01865 816043.

Tax avoidance report by MEP approved

SOUTH East MEP Anneliese Dodds, who represents Oxfordshire, has had a report approved by the European Parliament which will propose to clamp down on aggressive tax avoidance.

The measures in the report call for a new "fair taxpayer" label to be given to companies which take part in good tax practices, give better protection for whistleblowers, and introduce harsher sanctions for companies keeping money in tax havens.

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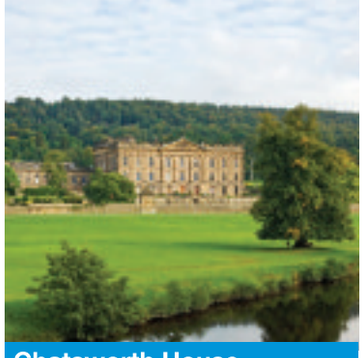

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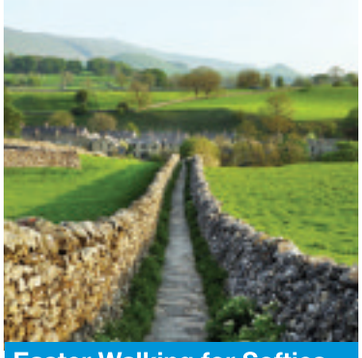

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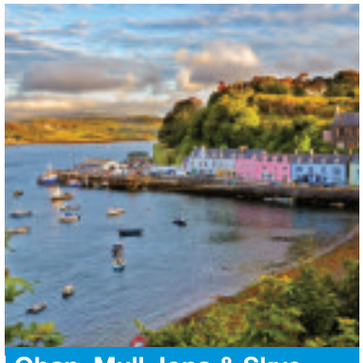

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Whale tale's all at sea

IN THE HEART OF THE SEA **(12A, 122 mins) An action/romance with Chris Hemsworth, Benjamin Walker, Cillian Murphy, Tom Holland, Brendan Gleeson, Ben Whishaw and Michelle Fairley, Charlotte Riley, Donald Sumpter, Richard Bremmer. Director: Ron Howard**

IN THE 1851 novel *Moby-Dick*, US writer Herman Melville expends 135 chapters and an epilogue documenting Captain Ahab's calamitous obsession with the eponymous white whale.

Director Ron Howard seems to spend just as long treading water in his sprawling maritime adventure *In The Heart Of The Sea*, which dramatises the real-life disaster that inspired Melville to put ink-filled pen to parchment.

Truth is far more thrilling than the fiction in Charles Leavitt's script, adapted from an award-winning book by Nathaniel Philbrick, which documents the ill-fated sailing of the whaling ship Essex in the winter of 1820.

The central battle for survival, punctuated by special effects-laden action sequences, should quicken our pulses and keep attentions afloat for more than two hours.

Unfortunately, Howard's film springs a leak early on and gradually sinks without anchoring our affections to the characters as they confront the morality of their bloody trade and the chilling possibility that they will never embrace their loved ones again.

Herman Melville (Ben Whishaw) visits emotionally crippled seaman Thomas Nickerson (Brendan Gleeson) at his home on Nantucket Island.

"I want to hear what happened to the Essex," Melville informs the seadog, who has never recounted this horrific episode, not even to his wife (Michelle Fairley).

Eventually, Nickerson acquiesces. In flashback, he recalls how inexperienced captain George Pollard stood nervously at the helm of the Essex, at the behest of the owners, Messrs Mason and Fuller.

However, the crew, including Matthew Joy (Cillian Murphy), looked to strapping First Mate Owen Chase (Chris Hemsworth) for their orders.

"This is your family now, for better or worse. Worse mostly," Owen tells the young Tom (Tom Holland), a terrified whelp heading to sea for the first time.

One thousand leagues along the equator, the Essex encounters a monstrous creature of the deep, which rams the vessel and leaves the men stranded far from home.

"As I live and breathe, he's mine," barks Owen, pushing the survivors and himself to the brink of insanity in the aftermath of the attack.

In The Heart Of The Sea is a gung-ho tale of men who lived and perished on the waves in search of the lucrative whale oil that brought light to 19th century America.

Hemsworth buckles his swash as the hunky hero, who allows his thirst for revenge to cloud his judgement and endanger the men under him.

Supporting performances, including an ineffectual Walker, are lost in the Sturm und Drang of the water-logged set pieces and a climactic bout of cannibalism.

"No right-minded sailor discards what might yet save him," professes Owen. Alas, screenwriter Leavitt discards the characterisation and subtlety that could have saved the film.

DADDY'S HOME **(12A, 96 mins) A comedy/romance with Will Ferrell, Mark Wahlberg and Linda Cardellini, Hannibal Buress, Thomas Haden Church, Owen Vaccaro, Scarlett Estevez. Director: Sean Anders**

GROWN men degenerate into petty, vindictive and jealous children in Sean Anders's comedy of bad parenting and clashing egos.

The perfect storm of Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg's first on-screen pairing – the goofy 2010 cop caper *The Other Guys* – has blown over, leaving behind the overcast skies of a mean-spirited game of testosterone-fuelled one-upmanship that is surprisingly light on belly laughs and charm.

A misfiring script stacks the odds heavily in favour of one of the actors, lavishing misery on his rival to the point that any initial pangs of sympathy are supplanted by incredulity and ultimately disdain.

By the time the three writers are ready to engineer the obligatory reversal of fortune, it's too little, too late.

Ferrell plays to type as mild-mannered nice guy Brad Taggart, who works at a smooth jazz radio station called The Panda under a politically incorrect boss (Thomas Haden Church).

Mark Wahlberg plays Dusty Mayron in *Daddy's Home*, above; the whale is the big star in *Heart of the Sea* with Chris Hemsworth and Cillian Murphy, main picture, left

Life is great for Brad: he is married to sex bomb Sarah (Linda Cardellini) and has two beautiful step-children Dylan (Owen Vaccaro) and Megan (Scarlett Estevez) from her first marriage.

Out of the blue, Sarah's first husband Dusty Mayron (Wahlberg) makes contact and persuades Brad to let him visit the children.

She urges extreme caution, describing her ex as what might happen if "Jesse James and Mick Jagger had a baby", but Brad is unperturbed, believing that it's important for Dylan and Megan to have their biological father in their life, even if he is a scoundrel.

Brad's benevolence is tested to breaking point as Dusty swaggers into town, intent on breaking up the happy home and reclaiming his position as alpha male.

Daddy's Home is a morass of half-baked ideas and sketches, which fail to gel.

Who's the daddy? Certainly not this uneven picture.

Cake Bookworm

AS WE RING in the New Year, Hannah Stephenson makes room on her bookshelves and previews the genres, authors and new titles to lookout for in 2016 . . .

TOP TRENDS

Cathy Rentzenbrink, author and contributing editor of trade publication *The Bookseller*, says: "Adult colouring books have been massive this year and that trend looks set to continue."

YouTubers and Instagram stars are also making their mark in the world of publishing, she says.

"So many celebrity tie-in books are now celebrities in the new sense, on YouTube. Zoella (Zoe Sugg) was *Girl Online*, which knocked David Walliams off the top spot. Her brother, Joe Sugg, wrote *Username: Evie*.

"Increasingly, cookery and lifestyle books are written by bloggers or YouTubers,so that will continue next year. The young talent coming through may have YouTube or Instagram careers."

THE BIG THRILLER

Rentzenbrink, whose memoir T*he Last Act Of Love* was a huge hit this year, predicts that thrillers will stay popular.

"There's a trend where we always want to know what the big thriller is going to be for next year, which started with *Before I Go To Sleep*, then *Gone Girl* and *The Girl On The Train*.

"Next year's big thriller is going to be *The Widow*, a debut novel by Fiona Barton (Transworld, Jan), about a woman whose husband has died. It emerges that he might have been a murderer. It's a cracker. The thirst for thrillers is never-ending, the page-turners which have a simple premise, like *The Girl On The Train*. The big Scandinavian authors are still doing well, but I don't think there's the appetite for them that there once was."

Next year will see the 100th anniversary of Agatha Christie's creation of Hercule Poirot and, after the success of her first Poirot novel, *The Monogram Murders*, Sophie Hannah will be writing another in the new series, *Closed Casket* (HarperCollins), which is due in September.

MARKING TIME

Anniversaries always spawn a surge of books into the shops.

Hooks for 2016 include the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death and the 200th anniversary of Charlotte Bronte's birth.

Caroline Sanderson, associate editor of *The Bookseller*, predicts: "Among the ones to watch will be *The Globe Guide To Shakespeare* by Andrew Dickson (Profile, Feb) and *The Brontes: A Life In Letters* by Juliet Barker (Little, Brown, April), a selection of letters and autobiographical fragments from the novelist sisters, Charlotte, Emily and Anne, their brother Branwell, and their father, the Reverend Patrick Bronte."

Her pick for the war anniversary is *First Day Of The Somme* by Andrew MacDonald (HarperCollins, April), which she says is the first book to really blame the carnage on British intelligence and leadership.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

New titles that seem likely to create a stir during 2016 will be coming from Jessie Burton, whose debut with *The Miniaturist* was a huge success. *The Muse* (Picador), the story of a young Caribbean immigrant, a bohemian artist and the mysterious painting that connects them across the decades, will be out in July.

Other names with novels due include Maggie O'Farrell, Chris Cleave and the late Terry Pratchett, who with Stephen Baxter completed *The Long Cosmos*, the last in his *Long Earth* series. Meanwhile, social commentator Caitlin Moran draws up her *Moranifesto* in her eponymous book.

CakeSport

banburycake.co.uk/sport

Ricky Johnson scored Banbury's second goal in their 2-2 draw

Puritans pegged back for a point

Banbury denied by late Evesham equaliser

BANBURY United let slip a two-goal cushion as they had to settle for a draw at Evesham United on Boxing Day.

Callum White and Ricky Johnson put United 2-0 up, but Evesham fought back to earn a point.

The draw leaves Mike Ford's side seventh in Evo-Stik Southern League Division 1 South & West and without a win in three games.

After Evesham had twice gone close in the first half through Adam Mann, Banbury took the lead in first half stoppage time.

Evesham United	**2**
Banbury United	**2**

White fired home from a narrow angle after Evesham had initially struggled to clear the ball.

Zac McEachran tested Kevin Sawyer shortly after the break, before Banbury went 2-0 up in the 52nd minute.

Darius Browne and McEachran combined to set up Johnson, who netted from close range.

McEachran and George Nash missed chances to put the visitors out of sight.

And they were made to rue those opportunities when substitutive Jared Wilson netted for Evesham in the 73rd minute.

Johnson then missed a one-on-one with Sawyer to seal it for Banbury, before Lance Smith scored the hosts' equaliser with five minutes left.

Banbury are next in action on Saturday when they host local rivals Wantage Town at the Spencer Stadium.

Banbury Utd: Harding, Welch-Hayes, Steedman, Stanbridge (Westbrook 72), Wise, Gunn, White, Nash, Johnson, McEachran, Browne (Bell 53). Subs not used: Martin, Kalakoutis, Blackstock.
Attendance: 331.

LATEST TABLE

EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Division 1 South & West

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cinderford Tn	22	16	4	2	46	14	52
North Leigh	24	15	3	6	53	21	48
Supermarine	23	15	3	5	43	22	48
Tiverton Tn	25	13	8	4	43	27	47
Winchester	22	14	4	4	57	27	46
Taunton Tn	22	13	6	3	41	19	45
Banbury Utd	**23**	**11**	**9**	**3**	**48**	**25**	**42**
Evesham Utd	23	10	7	6	40	25	37
Shortwood Utd	22	12	1	9	41	37	37
Bishops Cleeve	21	9	7	5	33	34	34
Larkhall Ath	24	8	7	9	41	37	31
Didcot Tn	23	9	4	10	42	41	31
AFC Totton	24	9	2	13	43	47	29
Marlow	21	8	3	10	38	39	27
Mangotsfield	23	7	6	10	35	43	27
Yate Tn	24	6	8	10	27	30	26
Slimbridge	23	6	7	10	24	30	25
Wimborne Tn	24	7	3	14	46	54	24
Bridgwater Tn	23	6	4	13	26	44	22
Wantage Tn	24	5	2	17	31	51	17
Burnham	25	4	4	17	25	54	16
Bashley	23	0	0	23	9	111	0

STARS with Claire Petulengro

Service provided by IMS Leeds LS1 8LB. Calls cost 60p per minute at all times

ARIES Mar 21-Apr 19

You must try to show a little more understand and patience with your loved ones this week Aries. You may not realise it, but Mars has set you a little on edge in recent days and you could do with taking a step back to look at the bigger picture. New ways to deal with complicated financial issues come with ideas you have on Tuesday and Thursday. Ring now for more advice from the stars.

0906 585 4360

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20

From Sunday you start to understand the reasons behind a close one's actions and you may even be thinking of forgiving them for something they have said or done. Don't go too far with your forgiveness as the stars indicate it may pay them to do a little more grovelling first. An event from Christmas is also given understanding by a younger person. Ring now to hear how spicy love is looking.

0906 585 4361

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

There is a new you emerging. No longer do you feel sorry for yourself but you're ready, willing and able to face life head on. You have more energy than you had last month and this is proven by the new list of arrangements and commitments you are now willing to take on. Paperwork you have avoided doing can be successfully completed with the help of Friday's line up. Ring now for advice in full.

0906 585 4362

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22

I can see that you're upset with the way you've been treated in your career recently, but your house of work indicates that you haven't done a very good job of making it clear what you want to achieve. Conversations this week can change this Cancer, so don't lose your voice, but use it. New relationships are well starred and you start to see a brighter future. Ring now for advice in full.

0906 585 4363

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22

Something you thought you were going to achieve, but didn't, will turn out to be a blessing in disguise. Have faith in who you are and what you want and others will too. A an attractive new prospect comes at a price. Find out what it is before you proceed, as it may be more than you are willing to pay my friend. Ring now to hear how Uranus helps you make peace with a major past issue.

0906 585 4364

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

You have been told a lot of lies and a lot of truths and it is up to you this New Year to find out which is which. Don't go to third parties, but go straight to the source to find out what's really going on. It's the key to you feeling like you again, after what I know has been a really emotional end of the year. Ring now to hear how past and present will soon be joining forces successfully.

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Something about the way others are behaving towards you should be a clear indication of how much you need to sit down and talk about what's been going on behind closed doors. Saturn, the planet of structure, is on hand to help you find the right words, so don't run away from confrontation, but face it. Ring now to hear why this is such a great month to kick bad habits.

0906 585 4366

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

It's time to sit down and do your sums Scorpio, as there are going to be some big undertakings that you'll want to sort out before this week is over and it's vital that you have a game plan. Those you thought were not on your side will surprise you with their words and actions. You see my friend, you have done a very good job recently of impressing those in high places. Call now to reveal a secret.

0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

Be prepared with your work this week as it is likely that you're going to be asked to do something which you thought you had much more time to complete. If you can get ahead of the game playing which many of the professionals are taking in part in, then you will come out in front. Relationship issues can be faced, talked about and solved on Friday. Ring now for the love low down.

0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

I know you're finding it hard to think straight in love lately. Someone you thought you would be able to get straight answers from gives you nothing but mixed messages. Fellow Capricorns prove there's strength in numbers when it comes to dealing with personal affairs, so make sure you join forces with them. Ring now to hear how animals could be responsible for sparking romance.

0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Just because others are offering you changes, does not mean that you need to make them Aquarius. If you are happy with the way things are, then leave them so. By the same token, if you know you need to make adjustments then do so. Foreign links prove lucky and most intriguing for you and are set to make this year one of your best yet! Ring now to hear how Mars brings revelations.

0906 585 4370

PISCES Feb 19-Mar 20

Don't ignore any bills which come before you, but deal with them. You seThere is a really naughty air about your stars which is going to see you doing things many of the other signs in the zodiac wouldn't even think about. The good side to this is that you get to force changes which you have really needed to make, but been unable to. Saturn helps you turn a problem into an asset as you're offered the chance to shine and show your skills. Ring now for a major personal prediction.

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6 HOLIDAYS
7 EDUCATION
8 PUBLIC NOTICES
9 RECRUITMENT
10 MOTORS
11 PROPERTY

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CakeMotoring

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In brief

- SSANGYONG'S tough Rexton 4x4 has had a major update. The three models are all powered by a new 2.2-litre diesel engine. Compliant with Euro6 emission regulations, the four-cylinder unit offers 176bhp and a healthy 295lb. ft of torque, up 15 per cent and 11 per cent over the outgoing model. Better still, CO2 emissions have been reduced from 196g/km to 184g/km, while combined fuel consumption has improved to 40mpg. The engine is mated to a six-speed manual or seven-speed Mercedes-sourced automatic gearbox. Available in five or seven-seat versions, the range begins at £22,995.
- MOST drivers admit that road rage at bad driving makes their own driving worse, according to a study. Driver error remains by far the most common cause of accidents, says Continental Tyres' research. It found that more than three-quarters of 2,000 drivers polled tended to act more aggressively after being 'wound up' by others' bad driving behaviour, including tailgating and failing to signal.

Newcomer R-Line offers great value

Auto facts

Model: Volkswagen Polo R-Line 1.0 BlueMotion TSI
Price: £16,960
Insurance group: 13E
Fuel consumption (Combined): 65.7mpg
Top speed: 121mph
Length: 397.2cm/156.4in
Width: 168.2cm/66.2in
Luggage capacity: 9.9 cu ft
Fuel tank capacity: 9.9 gallons/45 litres
CO2 emissions: 99g/km
Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles

By David Duffy
david.duffy@nqo.com

WHATEVER you want from a car, there is almost certainly a Volkswagen Polo that can deliver the goods.

Thrill-seekers can opt for the heart-pumping 192 horsepower of the GTI, while greener-minded motorists can go for the near 70mpg consumption of the BlueMotion.

For the R-Line Polo, Volkswagen has used the three-cylinder, turbocharged petrol engine from the BlueMotion model, but has increased its power to 110 horsepower and replaced the five-speed manual gearbox with a six-speed.

The result is a remarkably quiet and composed, and superbly refined engine that punches way above the weight that its 1.0-litre capacity might suggest.

R-Line exterior styling gives beefier front and rear bumpers, deeper side skirts and darkened 16-inch, ten-spoke alloy wheels.

On the inside is a small, motorsport-inspired, flat-bottom steering wheel, side bolsters and R-Line-embossed seats.

With its roomy interior, decent-sized boot and plenty of storage, the Polo is a good choice for small families. Even the most basic model gets electronic stability control, electric front windows, a Bluetooth phone connection and an infotainment system.

Like a festive tin of sweets, every Polo could be someone's favourite

No such concerns will bother you if you go for R-Line specification, which bulges with bells and whistles. The leather-trimmed steering wheel, with 18 buttons, gives a clue to the sophisticated equipment.

In the centre of the dashboard sits the latest generation of Volkswagen's 'modular infotainment' system. The system includes a proximity sensor and a function that reacts to wiping movements by the fingers.

Self-levelling headlights, cruise control, air conditioning, a multi-function trip computer and parking sensors all form part of the R-Line package.

Safety features are first rate, with airbags, electronic stability control, hill hold and an automatic post-collision braking system which brakes the vehicle after a collision to minimise the chance, or consequences, of a second impact.

The R-Line will appeal to people who want the quality and comfort of the Volkswagen Golf in a smaller package.

Driverless vehicles tech recognised

A TRIAL of driverless vehicles has won the Automotive Award for Innovation from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

The trophy was in recognition of the technology involved to bring three driverless pods to the streets of Milton Keynes to assess their viability and the response of the public.

Working in partnership with academics to develop the LUTZ Pathfinder (low-carbon urban transport zone) the company behind the project is Transport Systems Catapult (TSC).

It wants to show driverless pods can help reduce road deaths and serious injuries by removing the human element from driving.

TSC's Steve Yianni said: "Ninety per cent of collisions on the UK's roads are due to human error in one way or another, so by allowing the vehicle to make decisions based on a broad array of information provided could help reduce this figure enormously."

However, there are questions to be asked about the LUTZ Pathfinder project.

For starters, the electrically-powered pods will be driving in pedestrianised areas as well as on roads, yet they have a limited top speed of 15mph. This begs the question of how safe will they be mixing among other vehicles that may well be driving at considerably higher speeds?

To counter this to some extent, TSC says each of the three pods will be piloted by a trained driver to make sure there are no risks to passengers or pedestrians. This then raises another query about how useful is a driverless pod when it needs a driver present and can carry only a single passenger at a time.

The plan is for the pods to run until 2017, allowing plenty of time to collect and collate data from the trial. A problem arises on another level. The pods use a 3D map of Milton Keynes coupled to on-board sensors to know where they are. While this means the pods are capable of conducting themselves safely, they will be in among other vehicles they cannot communicate with, so they cannot predict or plan for their actions.

This is a drawback of all driverless vehicles. Unless every vehicle on the road is using the same systems, there is a serious risk of one or more being unaware of the presence of other vehicles.

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